

God's Appointed Time—Not Before, Not After

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Based Upon Luke 13

Satan assailed the entire journey of Christ's ministry on earth. From the time of Christ's birth, the enemy tried to cut His life short, because he knew that he would be defeated, as when he was cast out of heaven. Hatred for Jesus caused Satan to inspire men to attempt to murder Jesus. Herod signed a decree to murder every child two years of age and younger, in the hope of eliminating a potential king whom he thought would threaten his dominion. Many times evil men sought to lay hands on Jesus to either stone Him or throw Him from a mountain to His death (Luke 4:30). All of these attempts failed, because there was an appointed time for the willing sacrifice of Jesus' life. Often, He said that His time had not yet come. When His time came, He would yield His life for the salvation of humankind. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17, 18).

As He did regularly, Jesus was ministering, when some Pharisees approached Him. "The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke 13:31-33). As usual, the devil wanted to take Jesus' life prematurely, but he couldn't. Jesus prophesied that He would be perfected on the third day. What was Jesus' perfection? What event did Jesus often reference when threatened by death? He knew that only when the time was right, He would be perfected through His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus' reference of today, tomorrow, and the third day was directly related to His ministry on earth. He spoke using the symbols of the Old Testament to state that His public ministry would be no less than or no more than approximately three years. He employed the day for a year principle found in scripture relating to symbolic Bible prophecy (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). Each day in symbolic Bible prophecy equals one literal year. It is a blessing to know that the Lord has our lives under His control. When the enemy attempts to take our lives, God must first permit him to. It is only as God's people have fulfilled their individual mission that they will lay down their heads in death. If we trust the Lord as did Jesus, our eternal lives are secure in Him.